

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT JA

SUBJ: ELECTIONS IN KAGAWA AND SENDAI

SUMMARY: ON JAN 27, TAKUSHI HIRAI (LDP) WON KAGAWA PREFECTURE HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS BY-ELECTION, AND TAKESHI SHIMANO, WITH OPPOSITION BACKING, WAS ELECTED TO FIFTH TERM AS SENDAI MAYOR. PREDICTABLE RESULTS IN BOTH CASES HAVE LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE RE COMING HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS ELECTION.

1. ON JAN 27, LDP CANDIDATE TAKUSHI HIRAI (42) WAS ELECTED TO HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS IN KAGAWA PREFECTURE BY-ELECTION. ELECTION WAS HELD TO FILL VACANCY BROUGHT ABOUT BY DEATH OF TARO HIRAI, NEWLY-ELECTED UPPER HOUSE MEMBER'S FATHER. HIRAI IS PRESIDENT OF SHIKOKU SHIMBUN AND ONE-TIME SECRETARY TO HIS FATHER. WITH APPROXIMATELY 60 PERCENT VOTER TURNOUT, HIRAI, WHOSE SEAT WILL AGAIN BE CONTESTED IN THIS SUMMER'S ELECTION, RECEIVED 209,522 VOTES. NORIYUKU TANIGAMI (JSP) RAN SECOND WITH 118,490 VOTES; SENNEN ISHIDA (JCP) OBTAINED 62,257; AND GAN TAKADA (INDEPENDENT) RECEIVED 2,368.

2. AS RESULT OF ELECTION, POLITICAL PARTY LINEUP IN UPPER

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HOUSE IS: LDP (135), JSP (60), KOMEITO (23), DSP (11), JCP (11),

NIIN CLUB (4); INDEPENDENTS (2) AND VACANCIES (6).

3. IN ANOTHER ELECTION HELD JAN 27, SENDAI MAYOR, TAKESHI SHIMANO (68) WAS REELECTED FOR FIFTH CONSECUTIVE TERM. BACKED BY FOUR OPPOSITION PARTIES, SHIMANO DEFEATED LDP CANDIDATE KAZUO AICHI, SON-IN-LAW OF LATE FINANCE MINISTER, BY MARGIN OF 166,173 TO 122,574.

4. COMMENT: ONE NOTEWORTHY ASPECT OF KAGAWA ELECTION, IS THAT JCP VOTE INCREASED FROM 16,241 (4.3 PERCENT) IN 1971 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION TO 62,257 (16 PERCENT) THIS TIME. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH PRESS THESE DAYS SEEMS TO VIEW EVERY LOCAL ELECTION AS BELLWETHER FOR HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS RACE, NEITHER OF JAN 27 CONTESTS APPEARS TO HAVE HAD MUCH SIGNIFICANCE FOR NATIONAL LEVEL POLITICS. BOTH TURNED OUT AS EXPECTED. KAGAWA, HIRAI, AIDED BY COOPERATION BETWEEN FUKUDA AND OHIRA FACTIONS, DREW HEAVY SUPPORT IN RURAL AREAS OF TRADITIONALLY CONSERVATIVE PREFECTURE, AND NO DOUBT, RECEIVED STRONG BACKING FROM CONSTITUENTS OF DECEASED FATHER. AT SAME TIME, MAYOR SHIMANO, WHO, AFTER 16 YEARS IN OFFICE, IS VIRTUALLY PERMANENT FIXTURE AMONG REFORMIST MAYORS, WAS UNBEATABLE, ALTHOUGH AICHI MADE RELATIVELY GOOD SHOWING. IN SHORT, CONSERVATIVES WON IN CONSERVATIVE TERRITORY, AND OPPOSITION WON IN OPPOSITION TERRITORY.
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